

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

Meeting 9:00 A.M.

Centralia Police Department Training Facility
1401 W. Mellen St. - Centralia

January 16, 2014 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Jim Cook, City of Aberdeen; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Dan Thompson, City of Oakville; Karen Valenzuela, Thurston County Commissioner; Vickie Raines, City of Cosmopolis; Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; J. Vander Stoep, Town of Pe Ell; Lionel Pinn, City of Napavine; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Wes Cormier, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Ken Estes, City of Montesano.

Board Members Excused: Arnold Haberstroh, City of Chehalis

Others Present: Jim Kramer, Facilitator; Scott Boettcher, Flood Authority staff. Please see sign in sheet.

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes
- FEMA PPT

1. Call to Order

Chair Raines called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m. She thanked Commissioner Fund and Chief Berg for the meeting facility.

2. Introductions

Self-introductions were made by all attending.

3. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Kramer asked to add election of officers to the agenda. Mr. Cook asked to postpone the elections because they were not on the agenda and more time was needed to talk to people to see if there are members who might like to be nominated. After discussion, the members approved moving the elections to the March meeting and adding a temporary election to the current agenda.

3a. Temporary Election of Chair and Vice Chair

There were thumbs up to retain the current Chair and Vice Chair until the March meeting.

4. Approval of Meeting Notes

There were no corrections to the meeting notes from November 21, 2013 and were approved by consensus.

5. Outreach Update

Commissioner Fund asked the jurisdictions to let the Outreach Committee know if they would like an outreach update since there are some new officials in some cities. Mr. Boettcher stated Chehalis will have an update on February 10; Montesano on Feb 11; Grand Mound/Rochester on March 12. Mr.

Boettcher is developing a new power point. In 2013 there were 27 presentations and they talked about what was done before the budget appropriation. Topics for the next one will include basin-wide solutions, the relation between large capital projects and the efforts made towards small local projects. There will be an analysis of the flood plain management throughout the basin in regard to land use, aquatic species and the enhancement of aquatic species. It will include the early warning system and the new inundation maps. Photos from the technical workshops will continue the story. Any other ideas or suggestions should be sent to Mr. Boettcher.

6. Update on Flood Maps

Mr. Boettcher stated that at the November meeting Mr. Dave Curtis showed the Flood Authority members the new inundation maps and the Google approach. WEST has completed the inundation maps for the Chehalis River at Centralia, the Skookumchuck River at Centralia, and the Chehalis River at Doty.

Some gages have not been reporting accurately according to WEST. NWS does not have the capacity to maintain the Doty gage and it was giving false readings. The Newaukum gage has datum error that threw off the measurements. Mr. Boettcher would like to convene the Tribe, USGS, and Lewis County to determine where the gages are and who maintains them. Mr. Averill stated the Flood Authority gages and the USGS gages are maintained and a meeting is a good idea. It should include Public Works and Emergency Management. Funding needs are much higher than what was funded in the past.

There was support for Mr. Boettcher to set a meeting on the gages and add funding priorities and sources.

7. Update on Local Projects

In November Mr. Boettcher introduced the local projects from 2012 through 2015. 86% of the \$14.8 million has been obligated in contracts. 100% of the Jobs Now money has been obligated. Specifically, Aberdeen's four projects are under contract and moving to final design and engineering within the next few months. Mill Creek is moving to its final engineering report soon.

Commissioner Cormier stated Grays Harbor County ~~would like to keep the Elma/Porter project in the Flood Authority budget (\$5-6 million). The cost benefit has very minimal impact and it is affected by the 100-200 year flood.~~ **is getting more information through a study to see if the cost benefit is there. This project is still under review.**

Mr. Boettcher stated surveys on the Wishkah Road project will begin soon. Access to all properties has been granted. Mr. Estes has information on the Montesano project.

Mr. Estes reported that four bids came in below the engineer's estimates. The contract went to a Vancouver firm for \$4.6 million. There was a preconstruction meeting on January 4 with Parametrix and the owners of the mill. Lead time for the delivery of the steel will be in July as a stipulation of the contract was to buy US steel. The City has asked the contractor to get preliminary work done which will be an additional expense but Mr. Estes is hoping to return about \$400,000 to the Flood Authority.

Chair Raines thanked Governor Inslee for including the \$5 million in the 2014 budget to replace funds that were removed for the Wishkah and Cosmopolis projects. There is support from the local legislative

representative. It is exciting that the Flood Authority has been able to make much progress in the last couple of years and she is grateful to the Governor.

Regarding the multi-purpose (restoration) projects, the Tribe has sent a scope of work to OFM and that should be completed shortly. Mark White has been working on those projects. The Tribe had some money in its budget for technical work and Mr. White is talking to state agencies to get permits. Once the contract is signed that project will move forward. Mr. Lund stated Ecology has not had any contact.

Mr. Boettcher reported that the Pe Ell wastewater treatment plant is also moving forward. The SEPA and the environmental review are done and the project is expected to begin in June with completion in 2015. Bucoda also has concluded its SEPA and environmental review with construction to begin this spring. The airport levee will continue next summer. Projects that were identified through the governor's work group last year will be starting construction this spring.

Mr. Ogden stated the Conservation Commission has identified 11 new critter pads in Lewis County and one in Grays Harbor County so far. OFM has a scope of work and is waiting for contracts to get back to the Commission. Some critter pads built last year will be expanded to include equipment storage and one new excavation route. Construction will begin in July 2014.

Ms. Beth Peterson has been talking to jurisdictions about future projects. The Project Committee will meet this afternoon to review those projects. At 2:00 today the Authority will see the first Flood Authority sign for the project at the Chehalis-Centralia airport.

Mr. Kramer stated Chair Raines' announcement about the \$5 million assumes restoring money for Mill Creek and the Wishkah Road project, as well as Phase IB of the airport levee.

8. Update on the Governor's Work Group

Mr. Kramer reported that the contract with the Tribe and the Conservation Commission had been signed. All of the \$28 million has been appropriated and obligated. Sandi Triggs is issuing contracts for the construction projects.

The Governor's work group is working on a technical and model development for an aquatic species plan. There has been considerable work done on what a potential dam would look like and how it would operate. Larry Karpack has new modeling with current cross sections based on changes from the 2007 flood and other changes in the Basin. Mr. Karpack has identified structures in the flood plain, which have never been fully estimated, as well as first floor elevations of each structure. There are 5,000 to 8000 structures in the flood plain. Mr. Karpack is looking at a way to estimate which structures would or would not be damaged. He came up with an approach which will come within a couple of inches +/- to determine almost every structure elevation in the flood plain. If the elevations are changed by various projects he can tell who will be most affected.

The work group has developed a final small projects list. The next step is to prioritize the list for recommendation in the next biennium.

The state agencies, WDFW and DOE, and Anchor, are involved in technical analysis and Mr. Kramer thanked them for their attention and creativity that they have put into that.

Mr. Averill stated the City of Centralia has raised several buildings. He asked if those would be captured in the study. Mr. Kramer stated he believed they would.

Commissioner Valenzuela reported that the work group also spent time on the question of water quality and the temperature of the water. They looked at the ability to contain water during flood times and augment stream flows during low precipitation times. The aspect of that is to cool down a too-warm river. Bob Montgomery prepared a report that for a certain part of the summer the Chehalis River is too warm for fish to survive.

9. Federal Emergency Management Presentation

Ms. Deborah Farmer is an insurance program specialist for Region 10. She works with other FEMA departments: community compliance and mapping. She presented a PowerPoint that explained how the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance and Reform of 2012 changed the insurance program. It covers realtor and lender responsibilities. The changes are huge and the communities need to help citizens understand what is going on. The lenders and insurance companies use the current flood map that is in effect for their determinations on insurance costs.

Ms. Farmer will be holding meetings with people who are affected by the new rates and will be in Grays Harbor County on February 6. She stated she is always available if someone needs to speak to her. She can be reached at: deborah.farmer@fema.dhs.gov or at 425.487.2023. She emphasized the need to coordinate with realtors, insurance, lenders, surveyors and homeowners. Commissioner Fund offered to have the Outreach Committee work with her on that.

Ms. Farmer stated Kristin Minich, also of Region 10, can also answer questions. She can be reached at kminich@nfip-iservice.com or at 360.658.8188.

Mr. Kramer stated there is a Request for Proposal that Lewis County is issuing for a consultant to assess the new phase of flood levels at jurisdictions and look at the CRS for consistency with jurisdictions in the Basin. Is there a way to administer part of this program that is more cost effective rather than each jurisdiction doing it? Is there a recommendation for strategic buyouts? There is \$1.5 million for buyouts to supplement FEMA. How do we get that money working for the flooding that occurs?

Mr. Kramer and the Flood Authority thanked Ms. Farmer for her presentation.

10. Public Comment

Ms. Heather Loose, Boistfort Valley, asked if the meeting about the gages would be a public meeting. She is concerned about the gages being unreliable. She stated she is very impressed with what the Flood Authority has accomplished in the past couple of years.

Mr. Averill stated because the gages are ~~unreliable~~ **not always reliable** Emergency Management Services has river watchers who live on the river. They know when something is going to happen and notify EMS.

Ms. Deanna Brix, Chehalis resident, stated she appreciated what she learned. She was happy to see and hear what is happening regarding the flooding. Ms. Brix talked about Washington State Animal

Response Team (WASART), an organization that can help rescue domestic animals from mud, wells, etc. After a flood there is a need for people to shelter their animals, and WASART can help set those up.

11. Reports

a. Chair's Report

The Chair had no report.

b. Member Reports

Centralia – Mr. Averill stated Centralia has a number of water issues. One is China Creek. It is a small watershed that drains under the historic district. Two years ago the city funded a study to see what could be done there. There have been some recommendations and one was a small retention structure east of town. A property owner approached the city and offered to help. He owns a mill pond and with that pond and some money from WSDOT the city thinks it has a valid project. A 2' berm around the mill pond with a control gate would lower flooding by 4/10 of an inch. The city talked to the Tribe and permitting agencies and it looks good so far. A 2' berm can be built with the funds the city has now. This is a priority for the city council.

Pe Ell – Mr. Vander Stoep stated that Mr. Penberth made a comment that a dam would allow business development along I-5. That is not correct. Mr. Vander Stoep thought what Mr. Penberth meant was there will still be building in the I-5 corridor, which is possible, but there will be no new building west of I-5 [in the flood plain].

c. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

d. State Team Report

Mr. Lund stated Jessica Housman had a conflict today and could not attend the meeting. She has been hired to fill Chris Hempelman's position at DOE, bringing several years' experience with the program.

Mr. Ogden stated DOE had some flood money and the agencies that applied for it did not include the Flood Authority or the Conservation Commission. He is working with Commissioner Fund and Ms. Napier to sponsor a project on the main stem. Willing land owners will put up 20% cash as a match. There is design work being done to get cost estimates. The grant application is due February 14 and it will be summer or early fall before they see a contract. It is a bank stabilization/habitat restoration project at the confluence of the south fork of the Chehalis River. The land owners want to do conservation reserve planting to develop a 200' forested buffer. It will be a sediment management structure which uses flood fencing, large woody debris, etc. The goal is to create the riparian buffer and protect the fish.

12. Financial Report

Ms. Napier summarized the financial report, stating total expenses are \$77,556.66. This includes \$10,000 for the inundation maps.

13. Meeting Conclusions

Mr. Kramer stated the Outreach Committee will schedule meetings with jurisdictions after developing their new presentation. There has been major progress on projects. The Governor's work group is

making progress on the analytical front. There will be a 2-day workshop in May on technical findings of the economic model and cost benefit results. There was a good discussion on FEMA insurance.

Mr. Kramer introduced Bart Gernhart with WSDOT stating that the field trip would follow Mr. Gernhart's presentation of the I-5 project, the impacts, and how mitigation was addressed.

Mr. Gernhart showed the project on the screen. There are one-directional roads on either side of I-5 tying into the airport road. There is a new overcrossing just north of Mellen Street. FEMA had DOT look at the floodway, using their 1982 maps. NHC modeled with help from WSE and WEST. The modeling showed the widening will have no measurable change in the floodway on the Chehalis River.

DOT had to mitigate the amount of fill to Centralia (250,000 cubic yards). It looked at properties but couldn't excavate what already has water on it in the winter. There were also archaeological issues. The biggest issue was the benefit to the flood plain. The model was clear that there would be an effect on the flood plain. There were two issues: conveyance and storage. The project did not affect conveyance. DOT came up with an agreement to pay a fee for each structure in the flood plain. That money would go towards projects that would help with flooding issues. There is \$500,000 to put towards those projects.

Mr. Kramer stated people say the flood plain is being filled. It might be useful to have a comment sheet or fact sheet that simplifies what happens when that much fill is brought in to an area, which Mr. Gernhart explained to the Flood Authority.

Commissioner Fund stated the Centralia Port is creating an area for retail/commercial called Centralia Station east of I-5. She would like the same type of fact sheet from Centralia Station about the effects of that project.

The presentation concluded and the meeting adjourned at 1:30.